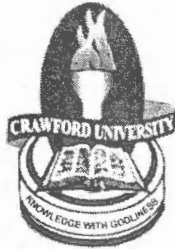


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The Nigerian Military As A Transformative Social Force : Contradictions And Latency

By

Agara, Tunde and Oluyemi O. Fayomi

Abstract

The orthodox Marxist prescription for a socialist revolution hinges on certain factors that must be on the ground before any socialist revolution can successfully take place. Among these factors are the capitalist mode of production, class consciousness and antagonism, revolutionary party acting as the revolutionary vanguard and the delineation of the society into two distinct classes each poised at eliminating the other. The above brief discussion points to the fact that Nigeria is ripe for a socialist revolution, perhaps with the exception that there is no revolutionary party, what other options are available? The answer to this is the military. The absence of a revolutionary party to lead the masses in a socialist struggle has thrown up the military as an option. The debate as to the possibility of the military leading a socialist revolution in Third World Countries has been a protracted and heated one which has even led to two schools of thought within the Marxist paradigm. This paper discusses the two strands of the debate with emphasis on Nigeria. The paper concludes that the possibility of the military becoming the last hope of emancipation of the masses is dashed because of the existence of certain fundamental contradictions which make the military apparatus an instrument for perpetuating economic inequality.

Introduction

The Orthodox Marxist prescription for a socialist revolution hinges on certain factors that must be on ground before any socialist revolution can successfully take place. Among these factors are the capitalist mode of production, class consciousness and antagonism, a revolutionary party acting as the revolutionary vanguard and the delineation of the society into two distinct classes each poised at eliminating the other. The development of these factors started with the transformation of the

instruments of labour – land, agricultural implements, workshop and tools – which were the instruments of labour of single individuals into productive forces. This transformation also resulted in a simultaneous transformation of these means of production of the individual into social means of production only workable by a collectivity of men – thanks to the industrial revolution.

The transformation changed the character of production from being individual to social production and the products were transformed from individual products to social products. Thus, the capitalist mode of production which, developed both as a logical extension from the industrial revolution and as an aftermath, created the nucleus of class consciousness and antagonism by treating socialized producers and their products including the means of production as the products of those who have socially produced them but by the individual capitalists, thereby creating a contradiction and at the same time producing a kind of social antagonism that has developed is one between the proletariat and bourgeoisie.

Since the capitalists through their control of the means of production and wealth accumulated over time are in position to control the state and its apparatus, the modern state therefore, becomes capitalist machinery whose policies favoured the continued hegemonic hold and control by the capitalists. As the exploitative relationship continues unabated, the only way out for the socialized producers who cannot appropriate their products is to seize political power and turn the means of production into state property. To give vent to this desire, the working class must organize itself. In other words, it must constitute itself into and form its own political party as a counterweight to the bourgeois political party. Marxist prescription for a revolution recognizes that the formation of a working class political party is essential for the triumph of the social revolution whose ultimate goal is the abolition of classes.

The above brief discussion points to the fact that Nigeria is ripe for a socialist revolution, perhaps with the exception that there is no revolutionary party to assume the vanguard for the struggle. So, in the absence of a revolutionary party, what other options are available? The answer to this is the military. The absence of revolutionary party to act as the vanguard for the masses has thrown up the military as an option. The debate as to the possibility of the military leading or even initiating a

revolution in Third World countries has been a protracted and heated one which has even led to two schools of thought within the Marxist paradigm. We shall now turn to a discussion of the two strands of the argument.

The Military and Revolution

The extent to which the military can contribute positively or otherwise to initiating social change in the character and nature of a political system has been a contentious debate among scholars. Durotoye (1989:10) puts this problematic properly thus "...can the military lead a revolution?..... can the armed power of a bourgeois state create and lead a socialist revolution?..... what role is there for the military in a revolution; or put differently, in what ways can the military collaborate in the development of a revolutionary project?"

Two strands of the debate can be discerned even within the Marxist paradigm; the Orthodox and Neo-Marxist perspectives. It is rather apparent that the controversy generated even within the Marxist paradigm may not be unconnected with the conceptualization of revolution, which, most often is vague and confusing. Perhaps, there would not have been two strands of the Marxist school if we all agree with Shanin (1982), that "the only irreplaceable and absolutely necessary elements in socialist revolution.... are the socialists who execute it, their commitment, their ability to see reality, their capacity to build up powerful mass alliances using every crack in the social system of domination and exploitation." Implicit here is that the socialist could either be military or civilian revolutionaries. Griewank (1971) has muted the idea that the term 'revolution' entered into the political science lexicon from astronomy where it is used to show the oscillation of a planetary body around another returning later to the starting point.

Predictably, the reactionary and conservative usage of the term became popular amongst early political scientists who were the first to adopt the term (Leiden and Schmitt, 1968:4). Later conception of revolution as renovation and transformation in the "basic principles of good government" by Machiavelli became popular (Griewank, 1971:20). Marx and Lenin, however, refined this usage giving it a new scientific dimension when Marx explicitly stated that;

The next French Revolution will no longer attempt to transfer the bureaucratic-military apparatus from one hand to another, but to smash

it, and this is the precondition for every people's revolution.... (emphasis his) Marx/Lenin, 1975:247)

The imperatives here which is to both smash and replace the socio-economic formation with a new one distinguishes a revolution from anarchy and the charge of nihilism arises primarily because of this insistence to smash and destroy the existing system. A revolution is distinguished from a reform, primarily, because of this insistence. As Majola (1988: 100) puts it, "a change or development that takes place within one and the same socio-economic formation is called evolution or reform". In the same vein, Yermakova and Ratnikov (1986: 153-154) have distinguished between social reform and social revolution. They posit that a social reform is a kind of "social transformation to which the powers-that-be resort in order to eliminate current contradictions in the social economic life of a country (or to create the impression of trying to resolve them)."

Thus, social reform implies attempt at improving the social and economic life of a country but this attempt is not underpinned by a radical change in either the class character of the society or the ownership of the means of production or in the class composition of those who wield state power. In contrast, social revolution refers to a radical change or transformation in "all the principal spheres of social life, such as the economy and politics. The principal issue as well as the main feature of (social) revolution consists in the transfer of state power from one class to another which is more progressive and advanced" (p. 147-148). The startling difference between a social reform and revolution can be located in the fact that while a social reform comes as a result of intra-class struggle, a social revolution is the end result of internal contradictions between antagonistic classes, that is, inter-class struggle. This is to say that no matter the scope, nature or comprehensiveness of a reform, it fails or falls short of a revolution if it does not smash the existing status-quo and replace it with a better one while at the same time resolving the issue of class antagonism and contradiction. With this understanding, therefore, we can now attempt to analyse the various arguments about the feasibility of a military-led revolution or vanguardism.

We shall start with the Orthodox Marxist perspective. The Orthodox Marxist perspective argues that revolution can only be generated by conditions found within the civil society. The military, being a part of the governmental-bureaucratic structure of the state, "an

instrument of parasitism, rather than construction; of conservatism, rather than radicalism; a retardant, rather than promoter of economic and social progress" is ill-suited to initiate or lead any revolution (Adekanye, 1989a:6). The orthodox Marxist perspective sees the military as part of the classes in society and therefore incapable of developing a separate consciousness. This view adopts a classical Marxist class approach which is a Marxist stool for analyzing social relations. In elaborating on this, Iskenderov (1971:150), points out that;

The class approach is imperative in appraising the army's role in the national liberation movement or any other social phenomenon. The army's position in society is determined by the nature of the society itself, the correlation of class and political forces, the level and scope of the revolutionary movement. In any class society the revolutionary struggle of the working class inevitably draws the army into the whirlpool of political events The army cannot be, never was, and never will be neutral.

The salience of class analysis confirms Cox's (1976:13) observation that "it is true that with a growing discrepancy in Africa between the life-styles of the elite and those of the masses, class as opposed to the primordial, ethnic and regional localities will undoubtedly become more important". However, Adekanye is not alone in this view. Another Nigerian scholar sympathetic to the orthodox Marxist view has also argued similarly. Ayu (1985:5) has also posited that the military must be understood and seen in the light of being a part of the state repressive apparatus, a symbol and instrument of the ruling class and therefore, its role within any revolution can only be counter-revolutionary. According to him, the military will intervene in any revolution either to dislodge regimes that threaten to move to the left or to prop up and assist dependent capitalism in crisis.

The basic logic on which this thesis seems to rest is the fact that armies develop features typical of the society which spawns it and in this case the military's consciousness will reflect a bourgeois society where power has been captured by the right wing. As Hansen (1982:8) puts it, the military "does reflect the tensions and contradictions in civil society and class categories and class antagonisms in the military are related in some way to class categories and class antagonisms in the society". Abrahamson (1972:40) has also expressed a similar sentiment when he

stated that "military obedience (discipline) cannot be totally independent of the society's political system. It is always to some group and some political ideology." By ideology here is meant "any set of comprehensive and consistent ideas" (Khutsoane, 1989:117). The fact must be made that officers, as people, are capable of independent thinking and adhering to any thinking which is a reflection of the materiality of the society in which they live in. This is so because consciousness is a reflection of material reality.

Thus for the military to successfully lead a revolution, it must be expected to commit class suicide, to turn against the society that gave birth and character to it and smash the same state apparatus that nurtures it and impose a qualitatively better one. This correlates with Wallerstein's (1977) view that "a revolutionary movement is precisely a movement that calls for a break with routine that demands sacrifice in the present." On this basis, the protagonists of this view argue therefore, that to impute a revolutionary and democratic motives and values to the military is superfluous because organizationally, procedurally, substantively and politically, the military is anti-democratic and even if it were possible for it to assimilate civilian revolutionary motive, it still needs to submit itself to a civilian-led revolutionary movement and performs only as the military arm of the struggle. First (1970) also agreed that since the African military do exhibit certain revolutionary skills and pretensions, and since they reflect and encompass the entire society and social forces, then for "the army coup d'etat to open up and not frustrate radical options, there would have to be not only an army programme for change, but an organized link with radical forces in the country." Put differently, the ability of the military to initiate, promote and govern economic development is what is being called to question here. As Asobie (1989:88) puts it,

At best, the army may set the rules of the game by which politicians govern, and context for power, but, in the end, it is difficult to conceive of the military as an instrument of development: it is rather difficult to industrialise by the gun. As for transformation, it is the economy that transforms the military and not the other way round.

It is interesting to note that this Orthodox Marxist perspective would seem not to admit of dialectics; the notion that a thing can be affected by and in turn affects other things, thereby existing within a

dynamic symbiosis. The total denial of the military as a motive forces for revolution in a society negates this belief and rather accepts that the military is impervious to revolutionary fervour generated within the social system in which it is a part. In reality, the military or a part of it could have a close affinity with certain class forces within the society whose interest lies in revolutionary change and genuinely anti-imperialist. As Amsden (1977:756) has pointed out, a left-wing military regime could emerge which would attempt to institute a revolutionary transformation of the mode of production. Still at that, the orthodox Marxist is the view that unless the balance of class forces in the wider society is favourable to such a fundamental change, the efforts of the military regime would ultimately end in defeat.

The neo-Marxist perspective recognises that there are countries whose armies possesses some element of radicalism which may generate to the extent to which they challenge their ruling classes and consciously seek to alter the existing property and power relations of their societies by smashing the existing structural status-quo. The point made here is that the military is not impervious to revolutionary ideology emanating from the society and so can be guided by that revolutionary ideology and thus become a vehicle of revolutionary changes in their societies. By this, the military regime will automatically cease to be an instrument of coercion and instead become an instrument for the advancement of socialist ideals and ideology. This perspective was derived from arguments developed by Mao and elaborated upon by Lenin when he stated that "a revolutionary army is needed for military struggle and for military leadership of the masses against the remnants of the military forces of the aristocracy.

The revolutionary army is needed because great historical issues can be resolved only by force and in modern struggle, the organization of force means military organization" (Lenin, 1962: 560-564). Therefore, "unless the revolution assumes a mass character and affects the troops, there can be no question of serious struggle" (Lenin, 1977a:174). Other scholars relying on empirical materials and evidence from the Third World have argued similarly. A major protagonist of this view has been the Soviet writer, Dolgopolov (1985). He argued that the armies of the Third World or post-colonial societies are radically different from the armies of the imperialist nations. The difference is that the armies of the

post-colonial societies are not mere instruments of colonialism, but they possess certain revolutionary potential having fought for their independence from colonial domination and because there is a low level of development, classes have just begun to form and therefore, there is low level of class antagonism. On the other hand, this inability is made for by a high commonality of interest which was engendered by the participation of various social groups and classes in the fight against imperialism and colonialism.

Thus, the military participation in this struggle for economic emancipation and independence led to the politicization of the struggle. Dolgopolov further argues that the revolutionary fervour of the post-colonial armies is enhanced by the class origin of the armies which is different from that of the advanced capitalist societies. He argues that in the capitalist societies, there is a close tie or affinity between the military and the upper echelons of the society through business, family, class and capital. On the contrary, the armies in Africa, Asia and Latin America are drawn mostly from the petty bourgeoisie or proletariat thereby creating an affinity between the military and the people. In essence therefore, and as Asobie (1989:91) has summarized it, "the military in post-colonial societies has an in-built potential to serve as agent of revolutionary change, precisely because there is in such societies a dominant contradiction between the nation as a whole (including the military) and the forces of imperialism." In continuing this argument, Andreski (1968:199-200) suggests that;

The political interventions of younger officers tend to be less on the conservative side than those of their seniors. This may be due to the natural conservatism of old age, or to greater satiety induced by having reached the summit of the hierarchy.

Lieuwen (1960:126) has, in the same fashion, argued that a great ideological conflict exists between the generals in Latin American armies and, on the other hand, the middle rank officers such as the majors, captains and the lieutenants with the colonels oscillating between the debates. He further submits that;

Almost invariably, Latin America's popular revolution of this century was led by the younger officers. They became the sponsor of fundamental change and reform, the underminers of traditional institutions, the proponents of public-welfare measures.

This phenomenon of young officers radicalism has been advanced because of the argument that the military mirrors the disparity and class antagonisms prevalent in the larger society and so, the young officers are seen as constituting a class of lumpen-proletariat-in-uniform as a result of the position they occupy within the military structure as the lowest-ranking military class, their least-paid, least educated and least-skilled technically status. Since their counterpart in the civil society constitutes the leading revolutionary force, they in uniform may as well be the military equivalent. Mazrui (1973) has referred to this class of junior younger officers as "lumpen-militarist" whose service working conditions make them to be sensitive to the sufferings and animosity which the under-privileged class in the civil society are also susceptible to, and therefore make them the most likely class within the military hierarchy that could have revolutionary fervour. "The armed forces, as Leiden and Schmitt (1968:25) have declared, do "play a key role in any revolutionary movement" and this cannot be otherwise as the military and police constitute among others "the chief instrument of state power" (Lenin, 1977b:268).

Thus, Durotoye (1989:25) notes that, "given the existence of some objective conditions, the military which is materially and socially part of the civil society, soon begins to exhibit the character of the struggle and thereby divides within and against itself". The revolutionaries within the army therefore mirror the same contradiction that polarize the society and can be expected to contribute to the revolutionary movement. The military becomes useful as no revolution can be birthed without violence. Lenin (1977b:276) has explained violence "as the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with a new one" while "non-violence produces a still-born revolution, asphyxiated by reforms" (Durotoye, 1989:27).

Beckman (1989:41) in presenting the views of Tyoden, a protagonist of this view, stated "that the deepening crisis of global capitalism, the peculiar form that this crisis takes in a neo-colonial society, and the type of 'critical social forces' which emerge in such a situation are all factors which contribute to raising the possibility of the military acting as 'a vanguard for the socialist transformation of Africa. It is a possibility that stares us in the face.'" According to Tyoden (1985:7) not only is this possibility high but it is the way that socialist transformation will begin in this country. He puts it this way;

There is nothing in the present conjuncture to prevent the emergence of a socialist fraction in the Nigeria military in control of state power in Nigeria. With this emergence, the first step towards the socialist transformation will be a reality. Until then, however, we shall continue to wallow in our buourgeois neo-colonial existence.

Madunagu (1986), one of Nigeria's leading socialist theoretician has also joined forces with this view. In a two-part article, he reiterated the possibility of a revolutionary army which can overcome the anti-democratic tendency of the military and turn it into "an armed detachment of the people in the struggle for progress. He even went further to state that the army could then assume the role of the vanguard "in the absence of an organized political vanguard". Definitely, the military is the most organized social force in Africa and Nigeria. There is no gainsaying this fact. Therefore, to edit the military out of any discussion of social transformation and revolution is to shut out a most viable organization for initiating revolution. Since the art of war is a political function and social change or revolution necessitate violence or the art of war, then revolution becomes a political enterprise or business. Thus, theoretically, the military monopoly of violence suggests them to be a viable agent of social change, both domestically and externally. Thus, insisting on a civilian-led revolution or vanguard in Nigeria is actually belahouring the issue at stake. As Amuwo (1989:60) puts it,

There is little choise... between a typical civilian democratic regime and an equally typical military dictatorial regime... and there is no reason, at least in much of Africa, why, given the history of political rulerships on the continent, the military should not have a niche in the theoretical revolutionary construct put in place for civilian.

After all, as Ake (1988:22) opines that;

The alternation of civilian rule and military rule... is not a manifestation of any ambivalence or struggle between democracy and dictatorship but the tendency for a Hobessian struggle... authoritarianism and even dictatorship (prevail) even under the democratic forms of civil rule. So, military rule comes as a minor variation or more accurately as a logical progressive and a relatively minor refinement of a prevailing trend.

Thus, the military in neo-colonial states present us with a high probability of serving, if not as a vanguard for a revolution, at least of anti-

imperialism and national development. The view of this school could therefore be summarized thus; in every revolution, there must be a vanguard party or movement whose destiny is to lead the revolution and provide necessary leadership role. Theoretically, there is nothing that says the military cannot provide this necessary leadership or indeed, be a part of the vanguard. In other words, the military could overcome its anti-democratic tendency to become "an armed detachment of the people in the struggle for progress]" (Madunagu, 1986). The danger foreseen by Adekanye (1989a:8) concerning this view is that granted the possibility of a radical arm of the military initiating and leading a revolution, "the absence of a permanent revolution geared towards ensuring against the rise of the phenomenon, a once perfectly or nearly perfectly revolutionary military formation harbours the inherent danger of getting conservatised over time".

Beckman (1989:42) on his own part is of the view that "politically, military vanguard theories divert attention from the primary task of building democratic political organizations capable of giving a democratic content and direction to the national revolutionary process. Not only are they diversionary, they pose a direct threat to that critical task". Specifically, Beckman enumerated some possible political implications of this view which include; first, the danger of adventurism, "the tendency to commit political forces in support of left military bids for power in situations where the prospects of succeeding are small". He argued that while such bids may succeed initially in installing a left wing military regime, its ability to sustain its take-over and contribute meaningfully to social transformation will be impaired by its weakness in having an organized political base and the resilience of the deposed ruling class forces to restore the displaced status-quo. This weakness therefore makes the left wing military regime susceptible to counter-revolutionary attacks, thereby making it highly insecure and intolerant with opposition even within its own camp.

Second is the neglect of political organizations, which will result because of the militarist tendency to ignore political organizations for which it has substituted itself. He argued that the apologists of military vanguardism have forgotten the primacy of political organizations in any

democratic society and this will encourage the diversion and dissipation of political energies away from the primary task of building strong organizations capable of defending popular democratic interests against the state. Third is the neglect of democracy to which the neglect of political organizations is tantamount. He sees military vanguardism as a threat to the democratic struggle because "a weak embattled socialist-oriented military regime, without an organized democratic base of its own, is unlikely to provide conducive environments for the building of democratic organizations.

To redress this inherent weakness, the left wing military regime should give the highest priority to establishing political organizations, conducting the struggle against state repression, the strengthening of internal democracy, engagement in struggles in defence of popular interest so as to earn the confidence and support of the people. Many Third World Marxist scholars are now agreed that a revolutionary movement can arise without an advanced political party but with the military leading the revolution. Orthodox Marxist view has emphasized on a revolutionary vanguard party to lead, consolidate the victory working classes, which of course is socialism, and is expected to be guided in its activity by knowledge of the objective laws of socialist social development. However, the examples of Ethiopian and Libya have lent credence to the fact that the military can act as a revolutionary vanguard in the absence of a viable political party. Asobie (1989:84 – 114) in analyzing Colonel Mu'ammar Quadhafi's led Military Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), quoted Quadhafi as explaining his military leadership position of the socialist revolution in Libya thus:

I am not in power I am only leading the revolution... (In Libya), there is no government... (but there is a consensus. If that consensus on a given matter is not one that I agree with), I can only instigate the masses, or incite the masses and explains things better... Here in Libya, we have managed to separate revolution from authority. Authority is practiced through the People's Conferences and Committees. The political reality in the Jamahiriya does not attach any significance to the existence of a government, a minister or a parliament... I am not a President... in my own country... nor am I the Head of State... I am the leader of a revolution and a true revolutionary (Africa Now Magazine of February 1983;p. 43).

Asobie (1989:110) is of the opinion that despite the fact that "the

balance of class forces in Libya does not seem to completely favour (the revolution", it, however, validates the premise of the neo-Marxist argument that because of similarity of social class and suffering of the military and the workers, the military is exposed to radical ideas and might become sensitive to the sufferings of the people. Asobie concludes that the military has been a transformative force in Libya and "what has occurred in Libya, since 1969, represents a social revolution with a socialist content" (p.110). In the same vein, Khutsoane (1989:115-142) has noted in his analysis of the Ethiopian military revolution that the absence of a virile working-class party and the consequent paralysis of the working class created a revolutionary vacuum which the military was able to fill. He posits that "the present military movement in Ethiopia is not a coup d'etat, It is a revolution of the people led by the armed forces of Ethiopia, not because we are the conscious group in the society but because we have the power to do it" (p.127).

Thus, in line with Kuusinson's (1960:586) argument that "a socialist revolution is not an invention of communist theoreticians, as reactionary propaganda alleges, but is dictated by the needs of social development", Khutsoane (1989:128) pointed out that, in the case of Ethiopia, the revolutionary movement preceded rather than followed the military take-over. According to him, "it shaped specific demands of that revolution, and only needed a strong leadership to present as well as prosecute those demands. The military leadership emerged to fill the leadership vacuum, which existed."

The Nigerian Situation

How do these viewpoints relate to the Nigerian situation, is our next consideration. Most arguments against the possibility of a revolution occurring in Nigeria and perhaps other Third World countries, hinge on the fact that our productive forces have not been fully developed to the point where the inherent contradictions in the capitalist mode of production can manifest with its attendant class antagonisms. Most important is that we are in the throes of neo-colonialism with the economy exhibiting a curious mix of emergent capitalism and feudal relations. Most theorists who hold to this view are of the classical Marxist stock and not Africans or from the Third World; they are outsiders just peeping into

the reality of Third World nations and existence. For certain reasons, it is not clear to them that although the productive forces may not be fully developed along the capitalist line, the neo-colonial relations of the Third World nations with the metropolis have created or imported a social relations far advanced than those expected within a system whose productive mode is not highly industrialized.

The relationship of exploitation, dominance and dependence which has been engendered has created contradictions within the system that class consciousness and contradictions have sharply emerged and become highlighted. The rather quick or premature emergence of this can be attributed among other things to the absence of ameliorating devices such as welfare or unemployment benefits which in essence are used in the advanced nations as palliative measures but which has the effect of cushioning the economic hardship of the masses to the extent that class contradictions and antagonism are not so sharp. In Nigeria, apart from the military, the only viable rallying point for mass action would have been the trade union. However, this becomes an unviable option for initiating and leading a revolution or even sustaining one because it is susceptible to infiltration, manipulation and interference by the bourgeois state apparatus. Granted the fact that "there is no army, once the people get up in arms, that can suppress it" (Draper, 1962:42). It must also not be forgotten that revolutionary creativity must be rooted in the theory and class position of revolutionary organizations.

The trade union commitment to revolutionary action is after all subject to how long the people can sustain the struggle and endure the initial hardship and deprivation which become accentuated because they have not yet seized the control of state apparatus. Experience has shown in Nigeria that trade union activities are effectively curbed and its support base obliterated whenever the government place a ban on it. The ease with which this can be done effectively negates its vanguard role and its ability to initiate and sustain any revolution all by itself, except perhaps it align with other revolutionaries, in this case, the military.

The reality of Nigeria experience clearly shows that there have been a dearth of political organizations and parties which can be entrusted

with or is even ready to lead any form of revolution or social change. What we have experienced thus far are mere attempts made at reforms. The fact cannot be dismissed off that the military posit an important variable if any revolution is to happen in Nigeria, mainly because it has the power to either forestall or retard it or, on the other hand, to accelerate it. While, it may play an important role in the success of a revolution, it is not in a position to sustain to a great length all by itself without building a strong democratic base and hand over to a revolutionary party. Nigeria, in the words of Beckman (1989:40) is already in a revolutionary situation merely waiting for revolutionaries. This is because the Nigerian society is one in which antagonistic social relations and classes have developed and class contradictions have affected even the army itself. The army has developed strong links between its officers' corps and the petty bourgeois propertied class that benefits from the prevailing social relations. Because of its reflection of the class interest of the society, it becomes very difficult to imagine the military having a community of interest or unity concerning national issues. This is basically because the nationalist considerations of the dominated will differ from the dominant class.

The upper echelon of the military has become bourgeois with all the pretensions of that class. Quite a large number of serving and retired officers have established themselves in business, either in partnership with civilians or on their own. Many served as managers or members of boards of directors of state owned public enterprises or private companies. Defence contracts and positions have created avenues for officers to come in contact with transnational companies and to acquire controlling interests in banks and other leading money generating companies (see Tables I – III below). The petty bourgeois or even proletariat backgrounds of some of these officers have nothing to do with their acquired distinctive bourgeois class aspirations.

Table 1 : Ex-Military Officers In Large Scale Farming And Agro-Allied Ventures

| NAME | COMPANY |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo | Obasanjo Farms Limited, Ota |
| Brig. Samuel Ogbemudia | Ogbemudia Farms |
| Maj. Gen. Musa Yar'Adua | Sambo & Mandara Farms |
| Maj. Gen. George Innih | Niger Valley Agro Industries |
| Lt. Gen. Alani Akinrinade | Niger Feeds & Agric. Ltd |
| Lt. Gen. Gibson Jalo | Jalo Farms |
| Lt. Gen. M.I. Wushishi | Nigerfirst Integrated Farms |
| A.V.M. Yisa Doko | Name Not Known |
| Lt. Gen. T.Y. Danjuma | Agric. Managers & Consultants |
| Maj. Gen. A. O. Aduloju | Long Acres Agro. Complex |
| Maj. Gen. David Jemibewon | Name not Known |
| Brig. Abba Walli | Abba Walli Agric. |

Source: Culled from various Newspapers Publication (1966-87)

Table II : Ex-Military Officers Involved In Distributive Trade & Commerce

| NAME | COMPANY |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Maj. Michael Deinsah | Trofany Enterprises |
| Comm. Alfred Diette-Spiff | BZB Group of Coys |
| Col. Mike Okwechime | Tiki Group of Coys |
| Maj. Gen. David Ejoor | Bensab (Nig). Ltd |
| Brig. Benjamin Adekunle | Samak Ind. Holdings |
| Lt. Col. Gabriel Idoko | Portland Cement Major Distributor |
| Maj. Peters Atsuku | -do- |
| Maj. Gabriel Entono | -do- |
| Maj. Riga Addingi | -do- |
| Capt. Aondoma S. Adom | -do- |
| Capt. C.A. Abayillo | -do- |
| Capt. Edward K. Ula | -do- |
| Lt. Col. Adejoh Yakubu | Benue Cement Co. Major Distributor |
| Maj. Ita Okon | -do- |
| Maj. S.I. Myam | -do- |
| Capt. Maples Udo | -do- |
| Lt. Col. Christopher Ikwue | -do- |

Culled from various Newspapers publications (1986-87)

Table III : _Ex-Military Officers Involved In Banking And Insurance

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Broad Bank of Nig. | Col. Sani Bello | Chairman |
| -do- | Maj. Gen. Innih | Director |
| -do- | AVM. Usman Muazu | Director |
| Chartered Bank Ltd, | Lt. Gen. M.I. Wushishi | Chairman |
| Equitorial Trust Bank | Col. C.O. Ekundayo | Director |
| Ganji Bank of Big. | Maj. M.H. Jokolo | Director |
| Gulf Bank of Nig. | Maj. Gen. J.J. Olunleye | Director |
| Habib Bank Nig. Ltd | Maj. Gen. S.M. Yar'Adua | Chairman |
| Highland Bank of Nig. | Air Marshal I.M. Alfa | Chairman |
| Intercity Bank Ltd | AVM. John Yisa-Doko | Chairman |
| North-South Ltd | Gen. M.I. Wushishi | Director |
| -do- | Air Comm. Dan. Suleman | Chairman |
| Trade Bank Plc | Maj. Gen. A. Mohammed | Chairman |
| United Bank for Africa | Air. Comm. Samson Omerua | Director |
| Universal Trust Bank of Nig. | Gen. T. Y. Danjuma | Chairman |
| -do- | Maj. Gen. Paul Tarfa | Director |
| Continental Merchant Bank | Col. Sanni Bello | Chairman |
| Great Merchant Bank | Lt. Col. P.O. Ogbebo | Chairman |
| Group Merchant Bank | AVM. Mouktar Mohammed | Chairman |
| International Merchant Bank | Maj. Gen. Mohammed Shuwa | Chairman |
| ICON Merchant Bank | Maj. Gen. David Jemibewon. | Vice-Chairman |
| -do- | AVM. A.D. Bello | Director |
| Manufacturers Merchant Bank | Maj. Gen. G.O. Ejiga | Director |
| Nationwide Merchant Bank | Lt. Col. Tunde Oyedele | Director |
| Prime Merchant Bank | Maj. Gen. Hassan Katsina | Director |
| Prudent Merchant Bank | Maj. Gen Hassan Katsina | Director |
| Bims Merchant Bank | Lt. Col. P.X. Wyom | Director |
| Royal Merchant Bank | Maj. Gen. (Dr) A. Rimi | Director |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Societe Baniciuire Nig Ltd | Gen. J.S. Jalo | Chairman |
| -do- | Comm. O. Ebitu Ukiwe | Director |
| West Africa Provincial Insurance | Maj. Gen. David Ejoor | Chairman |
| Roverton Insurance Co. Ltd | Maj. Gen. Olu Bajowa | Director |

Source : Agarah (1977:119) and Adekanye (1999;57)

The process of embourgeoisement of the old lumpen-militariat took place in three stages. The first stage saw professional military officers take on the additional responsibility of rulership as Head of State and Governors. The second stage was their inclusion in areas hitherto unfamiliar and alien to the professional soldiers such as government representatives and political appointees on boards of directors of various federal and state owned public corporations. The final stage was the contacts with private businessmen and contractors which both the posts and new responsibilities engendered. Although this link was still in its infancy and the military were initially cautious of it, the link was finally tightened irrevocably by the exigencies of the civil war of 1967-70 which brought the military into closer ties with the opportunistic and parasitic class of middle men, contractors, suppliers and arms dealers.

Conclusion

It is easy to conclude from the foregoing analysis that the military portend the last hope for the emancipation of the masses in the face of the failure of a mass party and the hegemonic control of the state apparatus by the ruling class. But this hope is dashed by the existence of contradictions within the military apparatus itself. It is one of the inevitability of the capitalist society that virtually every system or group, in the society usually gets infected with the inequality, perversion and corruption prevailing in the society. The capitalist society is like an insidious cancer that slowly but relentlessly eats away the social basis of economic egalitarianism and the reliability of every social group with it. Although military rule is usually seen as an aberration by western scholars, however, for third world countries desirous of development and eradication of the economic cancer of capitalism, the military should have portend a veritable option, more so with the ease with which they govern unencumbered with democratic processes.

This brings to bear an important point. The first is that a democratically elected government does not in any way points to, neither does it lead to political modernization or development. Democracy and democratic process do not have the power to confer that honour. Likewise, military regimes, especially the revolutionary type, do not infer the opposite. Both merely illustrate different phases of political reality. A systemic contradiction within the military elites has rendered it an instrument for perpetuating economic inequality and negates the possibility of their acting as a revolutionary vanguard in the absence of the mass party. Vagts (1959) and others have opined that power sought by the military is not merely to defeat external aggressors but also to secure non-professional values such as those of a careerist and materialist. We can also agree with the observation made by Thompson (1973) with regard to the experience of Nigeria, that few coups were motivated by professional goals but that a substantial majority was as a result of other considerations which have rendered the military as an unviable option for leading a socialist revolution in Nigeria.

So the conclusion opened is that a socialist revolution in Nigeria is still a thing of the future. It must await either a conscious revolutionary mass party, which seems far-fetched as the ruling class will of necessity truncate its emergence with all sorts of laws and policies, or a new breed of military elites whose conscience and consciousness are not mortgage for pecuniary and material gains.

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